

The Halyard

Virginia Department of Education
Office of Educational Technology

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Charlie's Chatter

I just returned from a 30 minute presentation on managing stress with humor. We all feel stress and in fact we think there is something wrong with someone who does not claim to be stressed! I have a friend who jokes about the saying, "What doesn't kill us will make us stronger!" Some days I think I am becoming the strongest person I know. The point of the presentation was looking for ways that we can laugh at stress. Sometimes it is a choice, we laugh or we cry. I remember when my mother became a victim of Alzheimer's and the devastation it brought both to her and to her children. I quickly learned that humor was going to be the only way to survive this situation. Sometimes it is not easy to find the laughter but it really does help. My mother was the greatest at hiding things-her house keys, her purse, her money, etc. and so it became a game with us to see who could find the missing item first.

As we approach the last months of school, our stress level is going to increase and we have a choice in how we are going to respond. Teachers are going to be looking to us to assist them in the research assignments they want to do after the SOL tests are finished. The race for the VCRs will begin and everyone will want everything yesterday. And you are facing inventory, new book orders, getting the overdue books returned, and a host of other end of year activities.

So make a promise to yourself, to find the humor, to share the humor, tell the joke, and be the calming port of call on this sail to the Bay of Academic Achievement



Chester Middle School Through the Years

“Celebrating the Enduring Values in Chester Through a Century of Change”

This spring, twenty-one **Chester Middle School** 7th grade students in Chesterfield County were involved in the first phase of a research project celebrating the first hundred years of Chester Middle School on its present site. The project is called “Celebrating the Enduring Values in Chester Through a Century of Change” and is funded by a grant from the Partners in the Arts. The research will take place over the next four years. This year’s group researched the school, Chester landmarks, churches, and world events that affected the community during the years 1911-1931. Students of Chester Middle also participated in a survey to identify generations of family members who attended Chester Middle through the years. These results will be used to contact former students for interviews during the next phases of research.

This was a unique opportunity for students learn about the enduring values of family, religion, education, democracy, and pride in the community. Students used primary sources, local histories, and interviews during their research. Mable Boyd and Earl Poole, life-long residents of the community, provided insights to life in Chester during the early part of the 20th century. Local historians Arline McGuire and Phyllis Bass also provided valuable information to the students.

A design team consisting of local artist David Gill and student rep-

resentatives will use the results of the research to paint a mural depicting the community in the decades that Chester Middle has been on its present site. Students involved in the research also compiled their findings in a PowerPoint slide show and a scrapbook that will be highlighted during the centennial celebration that will take place in 2011.

Research will continue over the next four years. Next year’s research focus will be the years 1931-1951.



Students at Chester Middle School put into practice their information literacy and retrieval skills while working on the historic project.



Mable Boyd shows the students the metal cup that she brought to school each day so she could have a drink of water.

The students worked under the direction of their librarians, Deborah Floyd and Shelly Armstrong. My thanks to both of them for sharing this story with us.

Stress and Laughter

Here are 5 things you can do to increase your joy factor.

1. Make a **joy list** of 20 things that are easy to do and make you happy. Try to do at least 5 things off your list every day.
2. **Give** the gift of **joy**. Making others feel good makes you feel good. What goes around, comes around and in this case it really works in your benefit.
3. **Look** for **joy** in everyday things. Stop and smell the roses, play with the dog/cat, read a story to a child,

whatever you do, find the joy—it is just hiding right in front of you.

4. **Move joyfully**. Don't let your body rule the mind. Pretend you own the world and move accordingly. Move like you are four years old and haven't got a care.
5. **Think joyfully**. Don't let the negative people around you steal your joy. Practice thinking positively and soon it will be easy to see the glass half full.

<http://www.StressStop.com>



What is authentic assessment?

Grant Wiggins, president of Authentic Education, has an article in this month's issue of *Edutopia* (Also available at http://www.edutopia.org/magazine/ed1article.php?id=art_1498&issue=apr_06) in which he speaks to the issue of teaching to the test.

Wiggins proposes that educators reflect on how and why assessment is taking place. In the drive to achieve higher scores on standardized tests, he

"Assessment should determine whether you can use your learning, not merely whether you learned stuff"

Grant Wiggins

is concerned that authentic assessment is being lost in favor of tests that only require students to answer simplified

questions on a standardized test which does not require students to demonstrate critical skills. He strongly urges educators to recapture the primary aim of assessment: to help students better learn and teachers to better instruct.

He also speaks to the issue of transfer of skills, an issue that librarians often use as part of their anticipatory set when teaching a skill in the library.

Calling All Middle Schoolers...

The April 2006 edition of *Educational Leadership*, published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development is devoted to looking at issues affecting the middle school. Articles range from grouping issues, transition to high school, young adult literature, and the marvelous, every changing dynamics of the adolescent mind.

A new report on the topic,

Breaking Ranks In the Middle, describes middle schoolers as "five years away from their teddy bears, and five years away from college."

Bruce Morgan and Deb Odom from Castle Rock, Colorado write this about the middle school student, "Like almost-grown eagles, what tweens need most is a safe place to fledge. They want to spread their wings and soar. Some days they are sure that they can.

Then suddenly it looks like a really long way down to the rocky ground below, and all they want is a safe nest with a place to hide. Our job is to provide the high ledge, a gentle push, and the assurance that the nest is waiting for their return."

This issue is well worth reading and sharing!

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We can not control the wind but we can adjust the sails.

URL's to Check Out

National Library of Virtual Manipulatives

<http://nlvm.usu.edu/en/nav/vlibrary.html>

4Teachers

4Teachers.org works to help you integrate technology into your classroom by offering FREE online tools and resources.

This site helps teachers locate and create ready-to-use Web lessons, quizzes, rubrics and classroom calendars. There are also tools for student use. Discover valuable professional development resources addressing issues such as equity, ELL, technology planning, and at-risk or special-needs students

<http://www.4teachers.org>

GEM- Gateway to Educational Materials
Educational resources correlated to state academic standards

Expert ratings of educational resources
Teacher comments on educational resources including "best practices" and new uses

GEM is a 700 member Consortium effort to provide educators with quick and easy access to thousands of educational resources found on various federal, state, university, non-profit, and commercial Internet sites.

<http://www.thegateway.org/>

Outside My Window

In 2003, Mark Gross found that the room for his International Relations class had no windows. So his [class](#) decided to make one. They asked people from all over to email pictures taken outside their windows and hung them on the wall in their [room](#) inside a frame made up of their own self portraits. [Photos](#) poured in! Today, Outside My Window is a school club that connects people worldwide through photography and email.

Classical Music Archives

The Classical Archives is the largest classical music site on the web with 37,815 full length classical music files by 2,018 composers. Free users are welcome but may only access 5 unprotected files per day after [logging-in](#).

<http://www.classicalarchives.com/>

Awesome Stories

AwesomeStories.com uniquely uses the Internet to link its story content to hundreds of thousands of the world's best online primary sources. Enjoy an interactive learning experience as you see relevant maps, pictures, artifacts, manuscripts and documents, IN CONTEXT, within each story. Take advantage of human-based searches for a safe, fast and fun way to learn the real story behind historic events, famous people, heroic exploits, legends, disasters, movies, plus topics of current and general interest.

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